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LETTERS

LIFE AFTER DEATH

I have just finished reading with great interest and indeed edification *The Soul after Death*; so much of the information of various kinds which has been gathered there was new to me. Your exposition of the Orthodox teaching on the other world and what the soul encounters there is excellent; it is precisely what today's world really needs! It is very well substantiated and clearly explained.

However, there are two questions which I cannot help but put to you:

(1) Are we not doing an injustice when we generalize modern "after-death" experiences and visions as "occult" and "demonic" simply because they are lacking in descriptions of some of the traditional Orthodox characteristics of such experiences? Dr. Moody's and similar researchers' descriptions of their patients' experiences present fascinating facts which are "neutral" in themselves; it is only the interpretation of these facts and certain practices which become really dangerous in some cases. And here, of course, I agree with you.

But many of these cases, both reported by Dr. Moody and other researchers, and encountered by priests and others (as in my own pastoral practice) are definitely "positive." In these cases there is nearly always, in some way or other, a "judgment," usually by a voice saying "not ready," and then a "return to the body," which is followed by a subsequent belief in after-life and a change of life on earth. Such a thing cannot be evil.

(2) You equate modern "after-death experiences with the scientific, para-psychological "out-of-body" researches, and call them "natural" and not really "other-worldly." But I know that in the USSR many believers are strengthened in their faith by such researches as Dr. Moody's.

I know a case of a mother whose 18-year-old son, after a car accident and several "clinical deaths," told her of his "after-death" experience. During a struggle (both physical and spiritual) of five and a half months, with eight brain operations (and two on his legs) and several clinical deaths with visions, he "became an angel." He spoke about "encountering his dead granny" (whom he adored and who had brought him up as an Orthodox Christian), told "how wonderful it is there," and how he "spoke with God Himself, Who was so kind and so good;" he said he was "not afraid to die," and asked his mother not to allow him to be revived again, and to allow him to die "without grieving" for him. He conscious-

(Continued on inside back cover)

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of the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood

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the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of
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VITA PATRUM

THE LIFE OF THE FATHERS

Saint Gregory of Tours

CHAPTER EIGHT

Saint Nicetius the Bishop

MODEL OF MEEKNESS, FREER OF CAPTIVES

THE ORACLES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE often bear witness to those whom the goodness of the Divine foreknowledge destines for His Kingdom, as we learn from these mystical words of a heavenly mouth which said to Jeremiah the great Prophet: *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee* (Jer. 1:5). And the Lord Himself, author of both Testaments, when He places at His right hand those whom His joyful generosity has covered with the Lamb's fleece, what does He say to them? *Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Matt. 25:34). And the blessed Apostle, that vessel of election, says, *Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son* (Rom. 8:29). Thus He predicted of both Isaac (Gen., ch. 17) and John (Luke, ch. 1), how they would be born, how they would live, their names, their works, their merit.

So now also, concerning the blessed Nicetius, that ancient mercy which enriches him who does not merit it, sanctifies the unborn, and disposes and ordains all things before they are created, willed to reveal first to his mother with what adornments of priestly grace he would flourish in this world. A book about his life has come into our possession, whose author I know not, which makes known to us many things about his virtues, but which at the time speaks to us clearly of neither his birth, nor his conversion, nor the order of his miracles. And although we have not researched all the

marvels which the Lord vouchsafed to work through him, whether in private or in public, nevertheless we propose to recount in the simplicity of our style those things which did not come to the notice of the first author.

1.Now one Florentius, of senatorial rank, having taken to wife Artemia and having had two children, was asked for as bishop of the city of Geneva. The prince having consented to this, Florentius went back to his house and told his wife what had taken place. Upon hearing this she said, "I beg you, dearest husband, to desist from this matter, and not to seek the episcopate of that city, because I am carrying in my womb a bishop whom I have conceived by you."* Hearing this from his wife, that wise man remained silent, recalling what the Divine voice had commanded aforetime of the father of our Faith, the blessed Abraham: *In all that Sarah hath said unto you, hearken unto her voice* (Gen. 21:12).

At last the time of childbirth came, and his wife brought into the world a child whom she called Nicetius at his baptism, as if to announce that he would be a conqueror of the world.** She had him brought up with the greatest care in ecclesiastical letters. After his father died, Nicetius, although already a cleric, lived with his mother in his father's house, working with his hands among the domestics, for he understood that bodily movements could not be subdued except by labors and pains.

One day, while he was still in the house, a foul blister appeared on his face, and in time it grew larger and inflamed and made the boy despair of life. His mother continually invoked the name of blessed Martin, together with the names of many other saints, and implored him especially for the healing of her son. And when for two days the boy had lain in bed with his eyes closed and had given to his grieving mother no word of consolation, she, wavering between hope and fear, was already preparing the necessities for his funeral; on the evening of the seconl day he opened his eyes and said, "Where has my mother gone?" Coming immediately, she replied, "Here I am. What do you want, son?" And he said: "Do not fear, mother, for the blessed Martin made over me the sign of the Cross of Christ and ordered me to get up healed." Having said that, he forthwith got out of bed. The Divine power increased the grace of this miracle, both to make known

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* It was the rule at this time that a married man, if elected bishop, would live separately from his wife; therefore, his wife's conceiving a child obligated him to continue his family life and refuse the bishopric.

* The name Nicetius means "conqueror."

Martin's merit and to deliver from a contagious sickness him who would later be a hierarch. The scar on his face remained as a witness to what had happened.

2. At the age of thirty he was honored with the dignity of the priesthood, but he did not abstain because of this from the work he had been doing before: he always worked with his hands among the domestics, in order to fulfill this precept of the Apostle, which says, "Labor with your hands, in order that you be able to give to those in need" (Eph. 4.28). He saw to it especially that all the children who were born in his house, as soon as they began to speak, were instructed in letters and psalms, in such a way that they could sing them and meditate upon them with the others and thus fill their souls with good things, according as devotion could suggest.

As for chastity, not only did he guard it most carefully, but also he always admonished others to guard the grace of it and to keep themselves from impure touches and improper words. In fact, I remember that in my youth, when I was beginning to know my letters and was in my eighth year, he told me, the unworthy one, to go to his bed, and he took me in his arms with the tenderness of fatherly affection; taking in his fingers the hem of his garment, he so wrapped himself in his tunic that my limbs were never touched by his blessed members. Consider, I pray you, and take notice of the precaution of the man of God, who thus abstained from touching a child's limbs, in which there could be neither the least sting of lust nor the least excitation to impurity. How much more, then, did he flee from any situation where there could be some suspicion of impurity? Indeed, as we have said, he was so chaste in body, so pure of heart, that he never spoke a jesting word, but always he spoke of the things of God. And although he embraced all men by this bond of heavenly love, nevertheless he was so submissive to his mother that he obeyed her as one of the domestics.

3. Sacerdos, bishop of Lyons, took sick in Paris, and as he was loved by the elder Childebert with a great love, the king wished to come to his bedside to visit him in his sickness. At his approach the bishop said, "You have known perfectly, O most pious king, that I have faithfully served you in all your necessities and that I have scrupulously carried out whatever you have commanded. Now I ask you, since the moment of my end has come, that you not leave me to depart from this world with sadness, but freely grant me the one request I make." And the king said: "Ask what you will, and you shall have it." "I ask," said the bishop, "that the priest Nicetius, my

nephew, succeed me as bishop of Lyons. For my testimony of him is that he cherishes chastity, that he loves the churches, that he is very devout in alms-giving, and that he delights. both in his work and in his habits, to do all that is becoming to God's servants." The king answered: "God's will be done." And so Nicetius was ordained bishop of Lyons with the full consent of king and people.

He always showed himself a thorough lover of peace and concord. and if he was offended by someone, he immediately pardoned the offens.: himself or suggested by someone else that pardon be asked. Once I saw the priest Basil, sent by him to Count Armentarius, who was then governing the city of Lyons with judicial authority; he said to him: "Our hierarch has by his judgment put an end to this matter which nevertheless has come up anew, and he advises you not to occupy yourself with taking it up again." The count, inflamed with anger, replied to the priest, "Go tell him that there are many matters brought into his presence that will be finished by some-on else's judgment." On his return the priest simply reported what he had heard. Then Saint Nicetius was vexed with him: "Truly, you will not receive blessings from my hand, because you have brought to my ears words spoken in anger." He was then reclining at table, and I was nearest to him on his left, then exercising the office of deacon, and he said to me in a whisper: "Speak to the priests so that they might intercede for him." When I spoke to them, they were silent, not understanding the Saint's intention. Seeing this, he said to me: "You get up and intercede for him." I got up trembling. and kissing his holy knees, I made entreaty for the priest. He granted the request, and giving him the blessing said: "I pray you, my beloved brothers, that useless words which are murmured rudely not assail my ears, for it does not befit reasonable men to sustain the impudent words of unreasonable men. Rather, you ought to apply yourselves to confounding with your arguments those who seek to plot against the Church's interest. As for senseless words, not only do I make no case for them, but I do not even want to hear them." May they hear these words who, when offended, do not know how to forgive, but even, calling a whole city to the vengance, do not fear to use witness who by evil reports say: "We have heard such a one saying this and that about you." And so it happens that Christ's poor ones are oppressed by such accusations, to the neglect of mercy.

4. One morning Saint Nicetius arose for Matins and, after waiting for two antiphons to be chanted, he entered the church, where, after he was

seated, a deacon began to sing the responsory psalm. The bishop said in irritation: "Let him be quiet, let him be quiet, and let not the enemy of justice have the audacity to sing." And these words were no sooner uttered than the deacon was silent, with his mouth obstructed. The Saint ordered him called over and said: "Have I not ordered you not to enter the church of God? Why have you been bold enough to enter herein? Why have you dared to join your voice with the sacred chants?" All those present were astonished, knowing nothing evil of the deacon, when the demon in him cried out and admitted that he was subjected to grievous torments by the Saint. He had, indeed, dared to chant in the church, but his voice, unknown by the people, the Saint had recognized, and he abused not the deacon, but the demon, with the harshest words. Then, having laid his hands on the deacon and cast out the demon, he restored the man to his right mind.

5. After having made himself known to the people by these and other signs, he departed to Christ in the twenty-second year of his episcopate and the sixtieth of his life.

While the Saint was being taken for burial, a small child, afflicted with blindness for a long time, was following with the others, weeping, being helped by someone who supported him. While he was walking, a voice was heard at his ear, whispering to him: "Go up to the coffin, and when you will have gotten under it, you will immediately recover your sight." The boy asked the man who was conducting him who this was who was whispering these words in his ear, and the man replied that he saw no one speaking to him.

The boy, having heard this voice in his ear a second and a third time, understood that he was to do something, and asked that he be taken to the coffin. He drew near, slipped in through the crowd of deacons in white vestments, and placed himself as the order had been given him; and as soon as he began to invoke the name of the Saint, his eyes were opened and he recovered his sight.

After this event, the child undertook to serve zealously in the Saint's sepulchre and to light the lamps there. However, some of the leading men of the city oppressed and persecuted him to such an extent that he could not even obtain food for himself by charity. As he was often lamenting over this at the foot of the blessed sepulchre, the Saint appeared to him and said: "Go to King Guntram and tell him exactly what you have endured; he will permit you food and clothing and take you from the hand of your enemies." Finally, reassured by these words, the child went to the king and obtained

what he asked.*

Thus the Divine goodness did not defer glorifying by signs the blessed members of the one whose soul it received into Heaven amid the choirs of angels.

When there had elapsed the days fixed by Roman law for the tesrament of any deceased person to be read publicly, the testament of this bishop was brought to the public forum, where it was opened and read by the judge in the presence of the people. A priest of the basilica, puffed up with rancor because the Saint had left nothing to the church where he was interred, said: "Many are always saying that Nicetius was poor in spirit; now it is seen very clearly, since he has bequeathed nothing to the basilica in which he is buried." But the next night he appeared to the priest in radiant apparel with two bishops, Justus and Eucherius,** to whom he was saying: "This priest, well-beloved brethren, covers me with blasphemies by saying that I have bequeathed nothing to the temple where I repose, and he ignores the fact that I have left it what I have that is most precious, the dust of my body." And they replied: "He has done ill to detract a servant of God." The Saint then turned toward the priest and struck him with fists and palms on the throat, saying: "Sinner who ought to be trampled under foot, leave off speaking foolishly." The priest woke up and felt his swollen throat seized with such pains that he had great difficulty just to swallow his saliva. Whence it came about that he kept to his bed for forty days with the most acute suffering; but having invoked the confessor's name, he was returned to health, and thereafter he dared not utter such words as he had earlier presumed.

The bishop Priscus, whom we knew always to have been a strong adversary of the Saint, gave a certain deacon a mantle of Nicetius. It was ample, for the man of God was stout of body. The garment's hood was wide and sewn, as was the custom for the white mantles worn on the shoulders of priests during feasts of Pascha. Now this deacon went about with this vestment and took little notice of the use to which it had been put. He wore it in bed and in the forum, without thinking that its fringes could give health to the sick if one's faith were strong. Someone said to him: "O deacon, if you knew the power of God and what was he whose vest-

(Continued on page 243)

* This incident has been added from St. Gregory's other account of St. Nicetius in *The Glory of the Confessors*, ch. 61.

** Earlier bishops of Lyons.

The St. Herman Winter Pilgrimage, 1979

From the time of St. Herman's canonization in 1970, special celebrations have been held in several places to commemorate him on his feast day, December 12/25. Several such pilgrimages have been held at Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, New York (see a description of the 1973 pilgrimage in *The Orthodox Word*, 1973, no. 53). In 1979 the Jordanville pilgrimage attracted some 150 people, chiefly young people from several nearby parishes.

The invited speaker for this year was Hieromonk Seraphim of the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery at Platina, California. His first talk was an informal one on Sunday afternoon, December 10/23, addressed to seminarians and novices, exhorting them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities afforded by the monastery and seminary and not to waste this opportunity by "taking for granted" the Orthodox treasures which may be obtained in such a place.

On Monday afternoon Archimandrite Cyprian, the Monastery's iconographer and the one man perhaps most responsible for the spread of traditional Orthodox iconography in the United States, gave a talk reporting on a new misuse of the popular interest in Byzantine icons in the West: the use of traditional icons as decorations on Christmas wrapping paper, indicating a disrespect for these icons which should be avoided by Orthodox Christians.

After the splendid All-night Vigil and the Liturgy on the day of the feast, the main talk of the pilgrimage (printed on the pages that follow) was given by Father Seraphim. It evoked a lively discussion among those present, particularly concerning the ways in which believers today can preserve their Orthodoxy in a world so out of harmony with it.

Following the discussion, Fr. Vladimir Malchenko of Toronto showed slides of his recent trip to Mt. Athos. In conclusion, the Abbot of the Monastery, Bishop Laurus, expressed his wish that all who had participated in the Pilgrimage might take back with them new strength and resolve to lead a God-pleasing life.

ORTHODOXY IN THE USA

ITS HISTORICAL PAST AND PRESENT

A Talk Delivered at the Saint Herman Winter Pilgrimage,
December 12/25, 1979,
at Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y.

By Hieromonk Seraphim Rose
St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, Platina, Ca.

WE HAVE GATHERED here today to venerate St. Herman, first saint of the American land, first Orthodox missionary to America, bringer of Orthodox Christianity to the New World. This feast gives us an opportunity to look at the Orthodoxy he brought: what has happened to it since his time, where it stands in this country today, what are the hopes for it – and for us, who are today's Orthodox Christians – in the years ahead, nearly two hundred years after the seeds of the true faith were planted here.

I will say only a few words about the past of Orthodoxy in America, in order to concentrate chiefly on what faces us today.

THE PAST OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA

First of all, of course, there was the mission of St. Herman himself, with the seven other missionaries who came with him from Valaam and Konevits Monasteries in the north of Russia in 1794. It is really astonishing what an Orthodox foundation these missionaries laid in Alaska, considering how few they were and what obsta-

cles they faced. One of these eight, Fr. Ioasaph, was consecrated bishop in order to increase the work in America, but he was lost at sea on the return voyage before he could even begin his work. There were few priests in the early years, St. Herman himself wasn't a priest, and the Russian officials in Alaska were not very cooperative – but in those years thousands of natives were baptized, and their descendents remain Orthodox today; and with St. Herman's labors as a monk, preacher, and carer of orphans, America saw for the first time a living example of the traditional Orthodox piety and spiritual life which made Holy Russia. This is something very important for our Orthodoxy today – this example of true Orthodox Christianity in practice.

The next great Orthodox missionary in America was the holy hierarch Innocent of Alaska, who first as priest and then as bishop gave a classic example of Orthodox missionary activity, translating the Gospel into the local languages, caring for the bodies as well as the souls of the flock of his vast missionary territory. In his last years, when he became Metropolitan of Moscow, he supported missionary labors in other places also.

With the sale of Alaska to the American government in 1867, the mission territory changed somewhat: the Russian government continued to send support to Alaska, but the seat of the Diocese now became San Francisco, and for the first time an English-language mission was undertaken. The outstanding missionary at the beginning of this century in San Francisco was Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich, a Serb by birth who died in Yugoslavia in 1940, whose books on Orthodox faith and practice in English are still in print. Bishop Tikhon (the future Patriarch of Moscow) also greatly encouraged the English-language mission, and under him and the other Russian bishops there were missions also for other national groups – Syrians, Serbs, etc.

However, even at this time the beginnings of weaknesses could be noted. America is a vast land; the Russians and other Orthodox settlers were widely scattered; priests were thinly spread; and perhaps most important of all, there were no other-worldly saints like St. Herman to plant the seeds of holiness deep in the American soil. Further, the English-speaking American people were not simple like the natives of Alaska, and they already practiced some form of Christian faith. For all of these reasons we can see the beginning, even before the Russian Revolution, of the terrible disease we see in the Orthodox jurisdictions in America today; the disease of worldliness. Outwardly, the Orthodox clergy began to look like the non-Orthodox clergy around them; inwardly, the concern was mainly to provide priests for the widely-scattered ethnic flock, without deepening their Orthodoxy by providing English texts of the classic Orthodox books or reaching out to tell the non-Orthodox who might listen that there is a true Christianity that is undreamed of in the West, the fullness of Holy Orthodoxy.

The Revolution of 1917 in Russia struck a deadly blow to the Orthodox mission: support from Russia was cut off, the oneness of the Church fell apart into national jurisdictions, and the clergy were left pretty much to themselves. The worldliness of American life was left free to put its stamp on the Orthodox mission, and there was not much strength to oppose it. When Archbishop Vitaly (later of Jordanville) came to America in the 1930's to become ruling bishop, he saw that Orthodoxy in America, if left to itself, would simply turn into an "Eastern-rite Protestantism" – that is, it would retain some of the externals of Orthodoxy, but inwardly would be scarcely different from the worldly Protestantism which is the predominant religion of America.

The second wave of Russian emigration after World War II, including the transfer to Jordanville of Archbishop Vitaly's whole

monastic community which he had established in Czechoslovakia – was the first major influence acting against the worldliness which has been engulfing America in the 20th century. But its influence has been mostly restricted to our Russian Church Outside of Russia – the other jurisdictions in America for the most part have continued their worldly path, and this is the chief reason for the widening difference between us and them.

One has only to go into a church of one of the modernist Orthodox jurisdictions in this country to see some of the results of this worldly spirit: pews, often organs, streamlined and sometimes dramatized services, various modern gimmicks for making money; and very often the chief emphasis is placed on ethnic rather than spiritual values – including the newest ethnic emphasis, Americanism.

The churches of our Russian Church Outside of Russia are usually quite different, with no pews or organs, and a more old-worldly kind of piety; and there has been a noticeable revival of traditional church iconography and other church arts. The traditional Orthodox influence is visible even in such external things as the way our clergy dress and the beards which almost all of our clergy have. Just a few decades ago almost no Orthodox clergy in America had beards or wore rassas on the street; and while this is something outward, it is still a reflection of a traditional mentality which has had many inward, spiritual results also. A few of the more conservative priests in other jurisdictions have now begun to return to more traditional Orthodox ways, but if so, it is largely under the influence of our Church, and a number of these priests have told us that they look to our Russian Church Outside of Russia as a standard and inspiration of genuine Orthodoxy.

However, the object of this talk is to go a little deeper than these externals and to see where our Orthodoxy is today in Ameri-

ca, and especially what we ourselves can do to make ourselves more fervent, more Orthodox, more in the spirit of St. Herman, who for all time has set the "tone" for Orthodoxy in America.

To do this, we must first of all recognize the chief enemy facing us: it is, of course, the devil, who wants to knock us off the path of salvation; and the chief means he uses in our times to do this is the spirit of **WORLDLINESS**. This is what has weakened and watered down Orthodoxy in America – and not just in the other jurisdictions. The spirit of worldliness is in the air we breathe, and we cannot escape it. You cannot watch television, you cannot go to a supermarket, you cannot walk in the streets of any city in America – without being bombarded by this spirit. In supermarkets and other large stores they even play lighthearted, senseless music in order to catch you in this spirit and make sure that you don't think or feel in an other-worldly way. Our Church and everyone in it is attacked by this spirit, and we can't escape it by isolating ourselves in a ghetto or in a small town; the outside influences can be lessened, perhaps, in such ways, but if we are not fighting an **INWARD SPIRITUAL BATTLE** against worldliness, we will still be conquered by it without fail. And so the chief question regarding the future of our Orthodoxy in America – and in the whole world, for that matter – is: **HOW DO WE REMAIN ORTHODOX AND DEVELOP OUR ORTHODOXY** against the spirit of worldliness that attacks us on all sides?

In order to answer this question we have to ask first another question that might be a little surprising: what is Orthodoxy? But this question is basic; if we aren't sure just what Orthodoxy is, we won't know what we're trying to preserve and develop against the spirit of worldliness. And so let us ask this question:

WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?

We can define Orthodoxy in no better way than in the words of the great 18th-century Russian Father, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk – a Saint whose fervent spirit is needed very much today by Orthodox Christians. We should read him more and practice what he teaches. St. Tikhon calls Orthodoxy "the true Christianity," and he wrote a whole book under this title. But "true Christianity" does not mean just having the right opinions about Christianity – this is not enough to save one's soul. St. Tikhon in his book, in the chapter on "The Gospel and Faith," says: "If someone should say that true faith is the correct holding and confession of correct dogmas, he would be telling the truth, for a believer absolutely needs the Orthodox holding and confession of dogmas. But this knowledge and confession by itself does not make a man a faithful and true Christian. The keeping and confession of Orthodox dogmas is always to be found in true faith in Christ, but the true faith of Christ is not always to be found in the confession of Orthodoxy... The knowledge of correct dogmas is in the mind, and it is often fruitless, arrogant, and proud... The true faith in Christ is in the heart, and it is fruitful, humble, patient, loving, merciful, compassionate, hungering and thirsting for righteousness; it withdraws from worldly lusts and clings to God alone, strives and seeks always for what is heavenly and eternal, struggles against every sin, and constantly seeks and begs help from God for this." And he then quotes Blessed Augustine, who teaches: "The faith of a Christian is with love; faith without love is that of the devil" ("True Christianity," ch. 287, p. 469). St. James in his Epistle tells us that "the demons also believe and tremble" (James 3:19).

St. Tikhon, therefore, gives us a start in understanding what

ORTHODOXY IN THE USA

Orthodoxy is: it is something first of all of the **HEART**, not just the mind, something **LIVING AND WARM**, not abstract and cold, something that is learned and practiced in **LIFE**, not just in school.

A person who takes Orthodoxy seriously and begins to really work on understanding it with his heart and changing himself – has at least a little of a quality we might call the fragrance of true Christianity; he is different from people who live by nothing higher than the world. St. Macarius the Great, the 4th-century Egyptian desert father, teaches in his Homilies that "Christians have their own world, their own way of life, their own understanding and word and activity; far different from theirs are the way of life and understanding and word and activity of the people of this world. Christians are one thing, and lovers of the world quite another. Inasmuch as the mind and understanding of Christians is constantly occupied with reflection on the heavenly, they behold eternal good things by communion and participation in the Holy Spirit... Christians have a different world ... a different way of thinking from all other men" (Homily V, 1:20). Later I'll try to say a word on how Orthodox Christians should be absorbing this different world and way of thinking. Orthodoxy, the true Christianity, is not just another set of beliefs; it is a whole way of life that makes us different people, and it is directly bound up with how much heavenly and eternal things are present in our life.

An Orthodox person who is **NOT** different can be worse off than the non-Orthodox. There is nothing sadder than the spectacle of Orthodox Christians, who possess a treasure that cannot be valued by any earthly measure, something which many are seeking and do not find in today's world – nothing is sadder than Orthodox Christians who do not value and do not use this treasure.

I'd like to tell you a little about a group of Protestants who live not too far from our monastery in northern California. In some

ways I think they are actually an example for us, in other ways a warning, and perhaps most of all an indication of the responsibility and opportunity we Orthodox Christians have because we have been given the TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

These Protestants have a simple and warm Christian faith without much of the sectarian narrowness that characterizes many Protestant groups. They don't believe, like some Protestants, that they are "saved" and don't need to do any more; they believe in the idea of spiritual struggle and training the soul. They force themselves to forgive each other and not to hold grudges. They take in bums and hippies off the streets and have a special farm for re-habilitating them and teaching them a sense of responsibility. In other words, they take Christianity seriously as the most important thing in life; it's not the fullness of Christianity that we Orthodox have, but it's good as far as it goes, and these people are warm, loving people who obviously love Christ. In this way they are an example of what we should be, only more so. Whether they attain salvation by their practice of Christianity is for God to judge, for some of their views and actions are far from the true Christianity of Orthodoxy handed down to us from Christ and His Apostles; but at least an awareness of their existence should help us to be aware of what we already have. Some of our Orthodox young people – for whatever reason, they don't realize what treasure their Orthodox faith contains – are joining such Protestant groups; and some of our uninformed young people go much farther from Orthodoxy – one of the 900 victims of Jonestown a year ago was a Greek Orthodox girl, the daughter of an Orthodox priest.

I'm telling you about these Protestants both as a warning of how Orthodox young people can lose the treasure they already have if they haven't been made aware enough of it, and more importantly, as a means of defining a little better the true Christianity we have

and these Protestants don't have. Some of our Orthodox young people are converted to groups like this, but it works the other way around also – some of these Protestants are being converted to Orthodoxy. And WHY NOT? If we have the true Christianity, there should be something in our midst that someone who sincerely loves the truth will see and want. We've baptized several people from this Protestant group in our monastery; they are drawn to Orthodoxy by the grace and the sacraments whose presence they feel in Orthodoxy, but which are absent in their group. And once they become Orthodox, they find their Protestant experience, which seemed so real to them at the time, to be quite shallow and superficial. Their leaders give very practical teachings based on the Gospel, but after a while the teachings are exhausted and they repeat themselves. Coming to Orthodoxy, these converts find a wealth of teaching that is inexhaustible and leads them into a depth of Christian experience that is totally beyond even the best of non-Orthodox Christians. We who are already Orthodox have this treasure and this depth right in front of us, and we must use it more fully than we usually do; it is a matter of spiritual life and death both for ourselves and for those around us who can be awakened to the truth of Orthodoxy.

Just this last week I crossed the whole of America by train – a vast land, with many different kinds of landscapes and settlements. And I thought of St. Seraphim's vision of the vast Russian land, with the smoke of the prayers of believers going up like incense to God. Perhaps someone will say to me: "Oh, you talk like a convert! America is America. It's full of Protestants and unbelievers, and the Orthodox will always be a little minority of people who stick to themselves and have no influence on the rest of America." Well, I'm not saying that we Orthodox will "convert America" – that's a little too ambitious for us. However, St. Herman himself did have such a dream. He wrote a letter after participating in the

first "missionary conference" on American soil, when that small band of missionaries divided up the vast land of Alaska and argued over who would get the most land to cover. St. Herman, hearing this, says that he was so exalted in soul that he thought he was present when the Apostles themselves were dividing up the world for the preaching of the Gospel.

We don't have to have such exalted ideas in order to see that the prayers of believers could be going up to God in America. What if we who are Orthodox Christians began to realize who we are? – to take our Christianity seriously, to LIVE as though we actually were in contact with the true Christianity? We would begin to be different, others around us would begin to be interested in why we are different, and we would begin to realize that we have the answers to their spiritual questions.

On this same train trip across the country I had what could be called missionary encounters. Of course, I wasn't passing out tracts in the aisles; but just sitting there in my rassa with a cross and my beard, I attracted attention. Some of it wasn't fruitful, but was typical of how we Orthodox are often regarded in America: one small boy thought I was "Santa Claus," and a woman pointed me out as "Ayatollah!" I also had several encounters with people who SHOULD have been Orthodox: one woman who was married to a Greek man; a man who was married to a Greek woman, but neither of them Orthodox because the woman's grandmother had become a Lutheran for social reasons – here it was obvious how worldliness had taken its toll of yet another Orthodox family in America.

But there were some fruitful encounters, too. To several people I was able to speak about Orthodoxy (which they had never heard of) and hand out some copies of "The Orthodox Word." One of these people had a story that should move our Orthodox hearts.

For most of the day that I was crossing vast Wyoming – full

of nothing but frozen, barren land and a few antelope herds – I was talking to an intense young man who was searching for the truth after finding out that the "charismatic" movement is not from God. After becoming disillusioned with American religion – the Methodists, Roman Catholics, Baptists, and various Protestant evangelists – as a last resort he is learning Russian in order to go to Russia and find out what he'll be told by people who are suffering for their faith. "Maybe that will be real," he said, as opposed to the religious hypocrisy he sees everywhere. He asked me eagerly about many things, from doctrines to customs to moral teachings, and then read the chapter on the charismatic movement in our book, "Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future" – which he said put into words what he felt (based on his own experience) but didn't have the teaching to express. Here is where Orthodoxy, the true Christianity, can literally save someone who otherwise might fall into despair from the inadequacy of the Christianity of the West. Here again a seed was sown; perhaps Wyoming won't become Orthodox, but a few souls there might.

All this is by way of explaining that Orthodoxy, in St. Tikhon's definition, is the TRUE CHRISTIANITY, and it was never more needed than today. We must realize what a treasure we have, and make it active in us. This need not mean going door to door like Jehovah's Witnesses, or preaching in the streets. The outward expression of our faith will come naturally once we have begun to go inward, finding out what this treasure is and letting ourselves be truly changed by it.

Recently an Orthodox person of some sensitivity and depth told me: "Orthodoxy is the truth, but it's too difficult for men today, so I seldom speak of it." There is a kernel of truth in this statement. Orthodoxy IS difficult compared to the Western denominations; but still – anyone who is capable of wanting a demanding

faith is capable of accepting Orthodoxy. We have to sow more, so there will be more to reap. But first of all we have to go inward and make the true Christianity of Orthodoxy a LIVING PART OF OURSELVES.

GOING DEEPER INTO ORTHODOXY

How do we do this? To some extent, anyone who is close to Church and tries to keep the Orthodox discipline, knows the answer to this question: you attend church services, keep the faith, receive Holy Communion, read Orthodox books. But it is possible to do all this almost mechanically, without going deeper into Orthodoxy.

Therefore, first of all we must not merely attend services and keep the outward form of Orthodoxy – we must be AWARE of what we are doing. If you've ever talked to an earnest Protestant or unbeliever who really wants to know what you believe and why you behave the way you do, you will understand how important this awareness is. You can literally save the soul of someone like that if you can begin, even in a little way, to open up to him the depths of Orthodox Christianity. Why do you make the sign of the Cross? Why do you pray to saints? Why do you stand up in church, or make prostrations during Lent? Why are you always singing "Lord, have mercy"? What is Holy Communion? Why do you confess your sins to a priest? Especially today, when we are surrounded by people who don't know the truth but some of whom are really thirsting for it – we can't just do these things out of habit; we must be able, as the Apostle Peter says, to give an account of what we believe and do to those outside the Church. There are many ways to become educated in Orthodox Christianity – ask your parish priest, read books, obtain a copy of some of the Church's services and begin to enter more deeply into their meaning.

Further, we must be not just aware of what our Church teach-

es and does – we must be trying to SATURATE ourselves in it. St. Seraphim, in his spiritual instructions, says that the Christian must be "swimming in the law of the Lord" – and this doesn't mean just making the Church a little part of one's life; it means going deeper and doing more. Of course, we start a little at a time. If you have been going to church just on Sundays, you can begin to go to the Vigil on Saturday night, and to feast-day services. If you've been trying to keep the fast of Great Lent, you can begin to go to more of the very moving services of Lent – the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, the Praises of the Mother of God.

And another very important thing: You should be reading spiritual books. St. John Chrysostom goes so far as to say that a Christian who doesn't read spiritual books can't be saved. Why? Because the world, whose spirit we absorb unconsciously many hours a day, is so strong that we will almost automatically follow its ways unless we are consciously filling our minds and hearts with Christian impressions. Innumerable books exist for this purpose, both in Russian and English: first of all the Holy Scriptures and Orthodox commentaries on them. Then the Lives of Saints and recent ascetics; "My Life in Christ" by St. John of Kronstadt; "Unseen Warfare" by St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and Bishop Theophan the Recluse; the Spiritual Instructions of St. Abba Dorotheos; the Homilies of St. Macarius the Great; the Orthodox service books, several of which are now in English; the "Lausaic History" and the Lives and Sayings of the Desert Fathers, which are just as fresh now as when uttered 1500 years ago; Lives of Russia's New Martyrs; Archbishop Andrew's "The One Thing Needful." The Monastery bookstore here can sell you these and many other books. If you have a spark of Christian fervor in you, you will be surprised how much your soul will be refreshed by reading books like these; they will give you a

taste of that other-worldliness without which the Christian soul withers and dies, especially in our worldly times.

And of course, a central part of this going deeper into Orthodoxy are the Church's medicines of confession and Holy Communion, which you should participate in as fully as possible, according to the counsel of your spiritual father. Then there are the daily opportunities for expressing Christian love – giving alms, visiting the sick, helping those in need. All of these means, if one's heart is in them, are what help to make the Christian different from the world, because they lift his eyes above this passing world to the heavenly Kingdom which is our goal as Christians.

These are the positive means of going deeper into Orthodoxy. There are, of course, negative things you will have to fight against as well. Once you become aware that there is an unseen warfare going on, that our Christianity is constantly being attacked by our unseen enemies, especially through the spirit of worldliness, you will begin to see also the negative things in your life that have to be changed. But with a firm understanding of the positive, inspiring side of Christian life, this struggle against negative faults and habits becomes much easier. Part of our awareness of what Orthodoxy is involves knowing that this world is largely the domain of the devil, the prince of this world, who acts on our souls and hearts chiefly by the love of this passing world. But if we are struggling in an Orthodox way, we are receiving the grace of God which is the only thing that can raise us above this world that lies in evil.

SOME PITFALLS

Now I'd like to say a word about a few of the pitfalls into which one can fall once one has begun to take up the path of fervent Orthodox Christianity. One might think, hearing about our faith;

that all one has to do is to become on fire with zeal for it, and then one can enter the Heavenly Kingdom. But it so happens that we have an enemy – the devil – and as soon as we become fervent, the enemy comes and begins to fight. I'll speak here of three of the ways in which he attacks, and this will also help us to define a little more precisely what is the true Christianity of Orthodoxy.

The first pitfall occurs when one begins to read Orthodox books, is inspired by them, but does not apply their principles properly to one's own life. Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, one of the great Russian Fathers of the 19th century – a beacon light for modern times, together with his contemporary, Bishop Theophan the Recluse – wrote a special book, called in English "The Arena," for the monastics of the last times – our times – where he gives advice which all Orthodox strugglers of our times should heed. In this book he warns beginners on the monastic path not to become so exalted by some inspiring writings of the Holy Fathers or even by the Lives of Saints, that one forms "an impossible dream of a perfect life vividly and alluringly in his imagination" and ceases to do the humble Christian tasks right in front of him (ch. 10). This is a basic pitfall. One can think about living in the desert, while right in front of one there may be an excellent opportunity to practice Christianity – someone may be in trouble, and with our high ideas we may not even think of helping him. Or, with these same high ideas in our mind, we may begin to criticize others and be lacking in the basic Christian love without which all our high ideas are empty. Through experience we must learn how to apply the writings of the Holy Fathers and the Scripture itself to our own level and circumstances. Our spiritual life is not something bookish or that follows formulas. Everything we learn has to become part of our life and something natural to us. We can be reading about hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer, for example, and begin to say it ourselves –

and still be blind to our own passions and unresponsive to a person in need right in front of us, not seeing that this is a test of our Christianity that comes at a more basic level than saying the Jesus Prayer. We have to read Orthodox books that are on our level – the ones I mentioned above are more for beginners – and we have to read them very humbly, realizing the nature of our times when worldly influences are present everywhere and affect our thinking even when we aren't aware of it, and never dreaming that we are on any level but that of raw beginners.

Bound up with this is a disease of today's Orthodox Christians which can be deadly: the "correctness disease." In a way this is a natural temptation to anyone who has just awakened to Christian faith and to spiritual life – the more one finds out about Christian doctrine and practice, the more one discovers how many "mistakes" one has been making up to now, and one's natural desire is to be "correct." This is praiseworthy, although in the beginning one is probably going to be too artificially "strict" and make many new mistakes out of pride (to which we are constantly blind). If you are critical of others, self-confident about your own correctness, eager to quote canons to prove someone else is wrong, constantly "knowing better" than others – you have the germs of the "correctness disease." These are signs of immaturity in spiritual life, and often one outgrows them if one is living a normal spiritual life.

But especially in our days, the spirit of worldliness is so strong, and there is obviously so much wrong in our church life – that there is a strong temptation to make "correctness" a way of life, to get stuck in it. And this is not only a disease of converts; one of the best bishops of the Old Calendar Greeks, Bishop Cyprian of Sts. Cyprian and Justina Monastery near Athens, has written that this spirit of "correctness" has already done untold damage to Or-

thodoxy in Greece, causing fights and schisms one after the other. Sometimes one's zeal for "Orthodoxy" (in quotes) can be so excessive that it produces a situation similar to that which caused an old Russian woman to remark of an enthusiastic American convert: "Well, he's certainly ORTHODOX all right – but is he a Christian?"

To be "Orthodox but not Christian" is a state that has a particular name in Christian language: it means to be a pharisee, to be so bogged down in the letter of the Church's laws that one loses the spirit that gives them life, the spirit of true Christianity. In saying this my aim is not to be critical or to point to anyone in particular – we all suffer from this – but only to point out a pitfall which can cause one to fail to take advantage of the riches which the Orthodox Church provides for our salvation, even in these evil times.

Even when it is not fanatical, this spirit of "correctness" for its own sake turns out to be fruitless. As an example, I can tell you of a very good friend of ours, one of the zealot fathers of Mt. Athos. He is a "moderate" zealot, in that he recognizes the grace of New Calendar sacraments, accepts the blessings of priests of our Church, and the like; but he is absolutely strict when it comes to applying the basic Zealot principle, not to have communion not only with bishops whose teaching departs from Orthodox truth, such as the Patriarch of Constantinople, and not only with anyone who has communion with him, but with anyone who has communion with anyone who in any remote way has communion with him. Such "purity" is so difficult to attain in our days (our whole Russian Church Abroad, for example, is "tainted" in his eyes by some measure of communion with the other Orthodox Churches) that he is in communion with only his own priest and ten other monks in his group on the Holy Mountain; all of the rest of the Orthodox Church is not "pure."

Perhaps there are only ten or twelve people left in the world who are perfectly "strict" and "pure" in their Orthodoxy – this I really don't know; but it simply cannot be that there are really only ten or twelve Orthodox Christians left in the world with whom one can have true oneness of faith, expressed in common communion. I think that you can see that there is some kind of spiritual dead-end here; even if we had to believe such a narrow view of Orthodoxy according to the letter, our believing Christian heart would rebel against it. We cannot really LIVE by such strictness; we must somehow be less "correct" and closer to the HEART of Orthodox Christianity.

In smaller ways, too, we can get carried away with "correctness:" we can like well-done Byzantine icons (which is a good thing), but we go too far if we are disdainful of the more modern style icons which are still in many of our churches. The same goes for church singing, architecture, the following of correct rules of fasting, of kneeling in church, etc. While striving to be as correct as we can, we must also remember that these things belong to the OUTWARD side of our Orthodox faith, and they are good only if they are used in the right spirit of the true Christianity St. Tikhon talks about. Vladimir Soloviev, in his Short Story of Antichrist, ingeniously suggests that Antichrist, in order to attract Orthodox conservatives, will open a museum of all Christian antiquities. Perhaps the very images of Antichrist himself (Apoc. 13:14) will be in good Byzantine style – this should be a sobering thought for us.

The third pitfall I'll just mention, because it doesn't seem to be a problem in our Church. This is the "charismatic" movement which imagines it is acquiring the Holy Spirit by various Protestant techniques. This movement is filled with such an obvious spirit of inflated self-esteem and has so many of the characteristics of what Orthodox writers describe as spiritual deception (prelest) that I

won't dwell on it here. The true Orthodox spirit is something very different.

SOME EXAMPLES OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY

After mentioning these pitfalls I'd like to get back to the subject and mention some final ways we have in our Russian Church Outside of Russia today of increasing our awareness of Orthodoxy and helping us to value it more and use it better.

Our Orthodox faith comes down to us through tradition. This means it isn't something we just read about or rediscover through books – it is something passed on from father to son, from one generation to the next, which we see being practiced around us by our fathers and brothers in the faith. If we are in living contact with these people who are passing down the tradition, "correctness" will not be such a temptation for us; we will be "hooked up" with the tradition. This doesn't mean we must believe every opinion we hear from seemingly pious people – we have the writings of the Holy Fathers and the whole tradition of the Church to guide us if there are doubts or perplexities.

Some of those who pass on the Orthodox Faith have a special message for us. I'd like to mention here just three of those who have something to say to us: two of them died in the last few years, and some of you here knew them; another is still alive. All three are bound up with Russia which is now undergoing the terrible trial of atheist rule, and that also has something to say to us.

The first of these men is Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo, who died last year after a long and full life in the Church. He was just setting out in life when the Russian Revolution broke out, and he had to rethink his whole goal in life under the changed circumstances. What is life for, and what is worth doing in life if all

the normal foundations of life can be so suddenly overthrown? Having known the warmth of Orthodoxy in childhood, he sought for it as an adult at first in vain, until he discovered that he himself had to GO DEEPER and SUFFER for what he needed. He read Dostoyevsky, which deepened his view on life; he fell in with a non-Orthodox Christian group, which had fervor but couldn't satisfy his Orthodox soul. He found a priest who opened up to him the MEANING behind the Church's services and customs. He read the Holy Fathers, and came back to life from his earlier despair. And then he found the elders of Optina: Nectarius, who taught him what true godliness or piety is – to keep everything of God's in honor; and the Elder Anatole, who gave him St. Tikhon's book "On True Christianity" and told him to LIVE by it.

Wherever he was – in Russia, Germany, or America – he strove to establish an atmosphere of Christian warmth where other seekers could find the peace he had found. He saw that most of our Christian life is outward and cold, and he strove always to awaken the true inward life and warmth of Orthodoxy when it is deeply understood and practiced. He hated the "hothouse" Christianity of those who "enjoy" being Orthodox but don't live a life of struggling and deepening their Christianity. We converts can easily fall for this "hothouse" Orthodoxy, too. We can live close to a church, have English services, a good priest, go frequently to church and receive the Sacraments, be in the "correct" jurisdiction – and still be cold, unfeeling, arrogant and proud, as St. Tikhon has said. In this way we will not grow because we don't have the sense of urgency and struggle that Vladika Andrew talked about. Once, when he only suspected that one of his spiritual children was growing comfortable in his Orthodoxy, he took him by the shoulders and literally shook him and told him: "Don't you be a hypocrite!"

You can read further about Archbishop Andrew and his Or-

thodox philosophy of life in a booklet published several years ago: "The Restoration of the Orthodox Way of Life."

From Vladika Andrew we can learn that Orthodoxy is a matter of life and death, that it requires intense awareness and struggle, that it can't be "comfortable" unless it is fake.

The second man I'd like to mention lived for many years right here in Jordanville. He was a philosopher – I.M. Andreyev. He belonged at first to the liberal intelligentsia, and only gradually, in the first decade of the Revolution, did he come back to Orthodoxy, where he found the whole philosophy of life which the Western schools could not give. His pilgrimages to Sarov, Diveyevo, and other monasteries in Russia just before they were closed, deepened and made real his new-found faith. Then came his years of standing in the truth when he sided with the Catacomb Church in the terrible years of the 1920's and '30's. He was a refined and philosophical thinker, but most of all he had an Orthodox heart, and he grieved most of all at seeing how few Orthodox people seem to care deeply for God and their faith and their fellow men. In his article "Weep," after describing how a young mother in New York City brutally killed her infant son, he addresses the Orthodox people: "All for one and one for all are guilty... Let each one think of himself... What were you doing on that evening when this unbelievable but authentic evil deed was performed? Perhaps it was your sin, your immoral deed, your malice, which turned out to be the last little drop which caused the vessel of evil to overflow. This is the way we must reflect, if we are Christians... Weep, brothers and sisters! Do not be ashamed of these tears... Let your tears be a fount of a different energy, an energy of good that fights against the energy of evil... Let these tears also awaken many of the indifferent."

Andreyev's burning concern shows us that we must have a

DEEPLY-FEELING HEART, or else we are not Christians.*

Finally, I'd like to mention one man who is alive today in Soviet Russia – Father Dimitry Dudko. He was born already after the Revolution, and came to Christ in the late Soviet period through the sufferings of living under the atheist rule and spending 8½ years in prison camp. His words in recent years speak with extraordinary power for us Orthodox Christians outside of Russia. One might disagree with him on a few theoretical points, but his HEART is so right, so Orthodox. In Fr. Dimitry is the same concern and feeling that Andreyev found largely lacking in the West; the same intensity and struggle Vladika Andrew preached. Once, when someone asked him at his question and answer sessions several years ago after the All-night Vigil, recorded in his book, "Our Hope" – Isn't Christianity in the West better off, being in freedom? – he replied: No. There they have spirituality with comfort, and you can't expect much from that; here in Russia we have martyrs and suffering, and from that can come resurrection and new life.

Actually, if you take seriously what Orthodox teachers like Archbishop Andrew, Andreyev, and Father Dimitry are saying, you can come to think there isn't much hope for us – we're too soft, too unaware, too shallow, too outward. Well, it's good to think like that – it might make us begin to wake up and struggle. Let the words of these fervent souls be a warning for us.

We are in a privileged position of peace and freedom, and this is dangerous for us. We can sit in the midst of our Orthodox treasures, the treasures that give salvation that no one else has – and be satisfied with our situation and so be totally fruitless. If we have difficulty in being Orthodox – then let us rejoice, for that means we must struggle, and there is hope that we won't wither and

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* On Andreyev's life and philosophy, see "The Orthodox Word," 1977, no. 73.

die spiritually.

Often we have the wrong idea about our situation. We think: "If only I could go somewhere else, change my situation, and the like, my problems would be solved;" but usually this is not right at all. We must start right now, wherever we are. If it is difficult, that is all the better – it means we have to fight for our Christianity; and if you have to fight and struggle, you become more aware.

But there are also opportunities in our privileged position, and we should use them.

First of all, perhaps many of you don't know that there are many contacts now between people in Russia and people outside. We can become informed of what is going on there. Read Fr. Dimitry Dudko's books, or his little newspaper. There are also Western sources which give fresh information on what is happening to Orthodox Christians in Russia – Fr. Victor Potapov's "Orthodox Monitor," the Keston News Service, "Aid to the Russian Church," and so forth. Find out about these suffering people and pray for them. Do you know about Nun Valeria, arrested and placed in a psychiatric hospital for selling belts with the Ninetieth Psalm embroidered on them? About Father George Calciu in Rumania, now in prison for his Christian sermons? About Alexander Ogorodnikov, imprisoned for holding a Christian discussion group? About Vladimir Osipov, the Russian patriot and samizdat publisher? About Fr. Gleb Yakunin, Fr. Vasily Romanchuk, Sergei Yermolaev, Igor Ogurtsov – the list is long. We have to start praying for these people who are suffering for their faith.

And we can help them: we have their prison addresses and can send them letters. Even if they don't receive them, the prison officials do, and the treatment of prisoners with "friends abroad" noticeably improves. Through "Orthodox Action" you can send literature in regular envelopes. There are even ways of getting books

through. You can write to Fr. Dimitry Dudko – some letters get through, and he even replies. Everyone can do something, and every bit helps. In the West we've grown too passive – now is the time when we can express our care and concern.

Perhaps even more, we can LEARN from the suffering people of Russia and other Communist countries. I don't want to frighten you, but we'd better face the fact that what they're suffering now, or something similar, is probably coming here, and soon. We're living in the last times, Antichrist is close, and what happens in Russia and other countries like it is the normal experience for our times. Here in the West we're living in a fool's paradise which can and probably will soon be lost. Let's start to prepare – not by storing food or such outward things that some are already doing in America, but with the inward preparation of Orthodox Christians.

Have you ever asked yourself, for example, the question how you will survive if you are placed in prison or concentration camp, and especially in the punishment cells of solitary confinement? How are you going to survive? You will go crazy in a very short time if your mind has nothing to occupy itself with. What will you have in your mind? If you are filled with worldly impressions and have nothing spiritual in your mind; if you are just living from day to day without thinking seriously about Christianity and the Church, without becoming aware of what Orthodoxy is, and you are placed in a situation like solitary confinement where there is nothing to do, nowhere to go, no movies to see, just staying in one spot facing four walls – you will scarcely survive.

The Rumanian Protestant pastor, Richard Wurmbrand, has a tape devoted to this subject which is very interesting. In a crisis situation like that, when all our books and outward props are taken away, we can depend on nothing except what we've acquired within ourselves. He says that all the Bible verses he knew didn't help

him much; abstract knowledge of dogmas didn't help much – what is important is what you have in your soul. You must have Christ in your soul. If He is there, then we Orthodox Christians have a whole program which we could use in prison. We can remember the Orthodox Calendar – which saints and feasts are commemorated when. We don't have to know the whole Calendar, but from our daily life in the Church we will remember the milestones of the Church year; whatever we have stored up in our hearts and minds will come back to us. Whatever prayers and hymns we know by heart will help us, we will have to sing them every day. You will have to have people to pray for. The world-wide dispersion of our Russian Church Abroad is ideal for this. You can go over the whole globe in your mind, one country or continent at a time, and pray for those you know, even if you can't think of their names – bishops and abbesses, parishes and priests both Russian and missionary, the monasteries in the Holy Land, prisoners in Russia and Rumania and other lands under the atheist yoke, the missions in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa where it is very difficult, the monks of Mt. Athos, the suffering Old Calendarists of Greece. The more of these you are aware of and praying for now, the better it will be for you when you have to suffer yourself, the more you will have to take with you into prison.

As Andreyev says, it is "one for all and all for one" – we are involved in practicing our Christianity in a world that has become atheist, whether or not open persecution is going on.

Every Christian has a talent from God, and He will ask what we have done with what He gave us. In Soviet Russia and other Communist countries, there is the talent of suffering for Christ and being faithful in the midst of trials. In the free world, the talent given most of us is the talent of FREEDOM: we have been given the freedom to practice our faith and the opportunity through our a-

bundance of Orthodox texts to become fully aware of it and deepen it within ourselves. But this Orthodoxy must be the TRUE CHRISTIANITY that St. Tikhon describes – the Orthodoxy not of the mind but of the heart. This kind of Orthodoxy cannot be acquired overnight; it requires suffering, experience, testing. But first of all it requires RESOLVE. If each one of us puts this resolve in his heart, if we take our Christian Faith seriously and resolve to be faithful to it, there can be a literal resurrection of true Christianity in our midst, something that Fr. Dimitry Dudko and others mention as beginning to happen in Russia.

Let me end with the words of St. Herman, whose feast we are celebrating – he also was one of those concerned ones who made full use of the opportunities given them. In the famous incident when he asked the officers of a ship what they loved most of all, and then put them to shame by telling them that only God is worth loving so much, he ended his instruction with these words, which you will find on some icons of St. Herman: "From this day, from this hour, from this minute, let us love God above all." A very simple thing – which is exactly what we all must do. May God give us the strength for it, by the prayers of His great Saint, Herman of Alaska. Amen.

A TRAGEDY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

IN MEMORIAM
FR. GEORGES VASILIEVICH FLOROVSKY (1893-1979)

By Archimandrite Chrysostomos
and Hieromonk Auxentios

Archimandrite Chrysostomos is Abbot of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery (Greek Old-Calendarist) in Hayesville, Ohio, a small dependency of the Holy Monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina in Fili, Greece. (See "The Orthodox Word," 1976, no. 70.) While completing his doctorate in psychology and teaching at Princeton University, he came to know Father Florovsky. Father Auxentios, a brother of the monastery, was a student of Father Florovsky in the Department of Religion at Princeton.

A HOLY STRUGGLER once described love: Love is to find a leper, give him your body, and then willingly take his body as your own. Before such love, which of us does not tremble with awe and shame at the poverty of what the world receives today as Christian love? Fasting perfectly, in the imagery of St. John Chrysostom, we devour others with our foul tongues. Holding to the steadfastness of the letter, we lose our grip on the fragility of the spirit. Hastening to correct the one who errs, we lose ourselves in error. Beholding

the splinter in the eye of another, we turn from the beam in our own, as our Lord spoke of the loss of love in judgment.

So it is that the recent passing of Father Georges Florovsky went by, in traditionalist Orthodox circles, without great notice for the most part, and with lamentably negative attention in some instances. So "perfect" in our Orthodoxy have many of us become that we lose not only Christian love, but the compassionate sense of honor that the Church has always reserved for those who, though they may have imperfectly served the Church, nonetheless served Her with their hearts. Feeling so convicted, then, we wish to make a few humble comments about Father Florovsky and ask that now, hopefully finding himself near the "bosom of Abraham," he will forgive our reception of his work and passing and thereby accept our sincere private prayers for the rest of his soul.

Father Florovsky was above all a scholar. Indeed, his scholarship, many have charged, seemed to dwarf his priesthood. In this sense he was not free from the taint that mere intellectual knowledge of the Holy Church casts on a man. But at the same time, Father Florovsky conveyed to any objective and sincere observer a certain sweetness from the Fathers that he so assiduously studied. Such an image is tragic, to be sure. In his writing, Father Florovsky crystallized this tragic contradiction. He wrote on subjects of critical importance to contemporary Orthodoxy: on the Eastern Fathers of the fourth century and the Byzantine Fathers of the fifth to the eighth centuries, from whose writings the quintessence of the historical expression of Orthodox spirituality can be gleaned. Even to devote particular attention to these Fathers is to open oneself to the most deeply hidden message of early Patristic thought. His contribution in this area was so decisive that, before their projected formal translation into English, manuscripts of these two works in crude, typewritten form, only roughly translated, circulated among

scholars. His collected works, an on-going publication project,* include perhaps the most superb volume on the Orthodox view of Scripture and Tradition that can be had in English; it is nothing less than a compendium of Patristic thought on these subjects.

Yet Father Florovsky could not, in these valuable gifts of wisdom to the Orthodox world in the West, come to a full, uncompromised statement of Orthodox Truth. Nothing better illustrates this than his otherwise brilliant commentaries on St. Gregory Palamas, where, with peculiar timidity, he so cautiously presents the notion of man's "deification" by Divine Grace that the notion itself loses its remarkable and tremendous impact. He succumbs, it seems, to the Western resistance to Palamite thought, rather more by understatement than by disavowal.

In his personal life, Father Florovsky's timidity once again evokes an atmosphere of tragedy, of contradiction, and paradox. For one so Patristic in his outlook and scholarship, he was surprisingly reticent in his condemnation of the heretical Sophiology of Bulgakov. Though he openly criticized Father Paul Florensky's "psychological-esoteric" Sophian theories and rightly saw them as anti-Christocentric and Florensky as a "stranger to the Orthodox world," Father Florovsky was unwilling to lend his scholarly abilities and insight into the Fathers to the refutation of Bulgakov's far more popular (and thus more dangerous) heresies. And at the same time, when we realize that Father Florovsky refused to attack Bulgakov in the atmosphere of academic pride and out of respect for Bulgakov's friendship with him, we see in Florovsky a sense (albeit a misguided and misplaced sense) of Patristic humility and compassion. We can marvel, too, that Florovsky was to remain for the greatest part of his priesthood (having been ordained into the "Pa-

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ris group" of Bishop Eulogius) under the Ecumenical Patriarch, expressing the unfortunately extreme ecumenist tenor of the Patriarchate, but nevertheless insisting, as he so often expressed it, that charity (ecumenical compromise, we might say) should never supersede the demands of Truth. Moreover, his idea of ecumenism was that it should be nothing less than a statement of the precepts of Apostolic Orthodoxy. He was a constant spokesman for the teaching of the Patristic philosophy of the Church and saw in this philosophy the complete Truth – indeed, the singularly unique Truth. Still, sadly enough, his very presence in their ranks gave to certain ecumenists, who had gone beyond the bounds of the Orthodox expression of ecumenical (that is, universal) truth and who advocated union with the heterodox at the expense of the Truth recognized by Florovsky, the weight of his influence. Indeed, his statements came to be misused and misunderstood and he failed at elevating his conceptualization of Orthodox Truth beyond the realms of academic philosophy.

Granted that Father Florovsky's most distinguished accomplishments were academic and not wholly spiritual, those accomplishments were none the less impressive and deserve acknowledgement. He taught in professorial posts (from assistant to full professor) at the University of Odessa, the University of Prague, St. Sergius' Orthodox Theological Institute, Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, and the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School. His most distinguished positions were at Harvard University and at Princeton University. At Harvard he held the chair in Eastern Church history and was proclaimed professor emeritus on retirement. Following his retirement from Harvard, he went to Princeton and taught in the now defunct Slavic Studies program, in the Department of Religion, and at the Princeton Theological Seminary. (It was at Princeton that he died.) His first publication

(in physiological psychology) was presented by Pavlov to the Russian Royal Academy of Sciences; it was written in fluent English. He subsequently published scores of articles and several books in history, theology, Patristics, and philosophy, appearing in English, French, Swedish, Czech, German, Russian, and other languages. An eminent scholar, a theologian, an historian, a philosopher, and a linguist, Father Florovsky, if in no other way, through his academic eminence certainly brought great honor to the Orthodox Church. Like a flower on an Icon, his academic honor surely did not share in the essence of the spiritual tradition which he so adorned; but he added to the beauty of Orthodoxy, bringing to her the respectful attention of those who might have otherwise passed by the Eastern witness. Never consciously a missionary, his work was still supremely evangelical in scope and effect.

The tragedy of Father Florovsky: the contradiction of superb Patristic scholarship and a failure to express its application in strong witness; the paradox of a man expressing Patristic humility in the context of compromising truth; and the sad image of a man separated from the depth of what he studied, yet without question also in some way joined to Orthodoxy in a profound way – all of these elements touch on a greater tragedy in contemporary Orthodoxy. We see in many circles a "Patristic Renewal" or "Patristic Revival," a return to the Fathers. Yet this return is not producing the would-be Orthodoxy of old, fragrant with love, humility, and compassion most curiously and paradoxically joined to commitment, steadfastness, and unwavering dedication to the immutable truths of the Church. Rather, it is producing an unknown "Orthodoxy," divided between brain and heart. It is producing an Orthodoxy that knows well the message of the Fathers in words and yet cannot join it mystically in practice to the needs of the heart. This Orthodoxy is a cerebral Orthodoxy which does not compel man to draw on the

Fathers as the source of action (on their theory as a guide for practical spiritual life), but which remains sterile and academic. It proffers theology without fasting, scholarship without Liturgy, description without experience, theory without practice. And it tragically leaves sincere scholars like Father Florovsky somewhere between the spiritual and the mundane, between theology as the flower of practice and theology as a blossom without roots. Father Florovsky's appearance, marked by his black rason and his blue beret, perfectly expressed this tragedy. Clothed in the Church, his head was constantly under the force of fashionable thought and academic reason.

In spite of the negative light in which some might wrongly think that his participation in a merely academic Patristic tradition seems to place him, Father Florovsky was not an example of the effete spirit of Patristic renewal. He was far more than those about whom that might be said. To know his tragedy – indeed, to know him even in a limited way – is to find something far deeper than our reason or judgment can reveal. For if we fail to see more in him, so closely joined as he was to the very words of the Fathers, then it is we who are foolish and effete. If he failed at finding the roots of practice which nourished the flower of theology that he knew so well, it is we who often, knowing the roots of practice, fail to produce and protect the sweet blossoms of compassion and love. We must look at Father Florovsky in terms of a patristic reflection given to us in the "Evergetinos." A certain elder saw, with his own eyes, a brother fall into a serious sin. Not only did the elder not criticize him, but he wept and said to himself: "He fell today and I certainly will tomorrow. But while he will no doubt repent, as for myself I am not sure." If we fear for Father Florovsky, how much more we must fear for ourselves!

ETERNAL MEMORY

Saint Nicetius the Bishop *(Cont. from p. 209)*

ment you are wearing, you would use it with greater caution." He answered: "I tell you truly that I use this mantle to cover my back, and since it is too big in the hood for me, I am going to have slippers made of it." At once the wretch did as he had said, and he had to submit immediately to the vengeance of Divine judgment. As soon as he had undone the hood and made himself slippers from it, which he put on his feet, he immediately fell to the ground, seized by a demon. He was then alone in the house, and there was no one who could help the wretch. And while he was spitting from his mouth a bloody froth, having stretched out his feet to the hearth, the fire burned his feet together with the slippers. And this is what I have to say concerning vengeances.

6. Agiulf our deacon, coming back from Rome, was bringing us blessed relics of saints. On the way he went aside for the sake of prayer to the place where the Saint reposed, and having gone into the temple, he was looking over the register of miracles which had taken place there, when he saw an immense crowd of people near the tomb who were gathering like swarms of bees about their hive. Some were taking from the priest who was standing there bits of wax which they carried away for a blessing; others, a little dust; some were getting hold of some threads drawn from the covering of the tomb—all carrying away the same grace of healing for different cases. This the deacon full of faith beheld with tears, saying: "If the devotion of my bishop had me traverse the fluid masses of the sea in order for me to go visit the sepulchres of the martyrs of the East and bring back relics of them, why shall I not take those of a confessor of the Gauls, by which I shall preserve the health of me and mine?" And straightway drawing near, he received some of the herbs which the people's devotion had put around the holy tomb,* and which the priest gave him from his hand, wrapped in linen. He carried them home and put them away with care, and right away the working of miracles justified the man's faith. For when he had shredded some of the herbs and given them with a drink of water to those with chills, they returned to health as soon as they drank, as did many others later. In telling us this, he said that already four people had thus

* A common custom in 6th-century Gaul. In *The History of the Franks,* VII, 12, St. Gregory writes of herbs placed on the altar of a church. One might compare the present Orthdox custom of taking as a blessing the flowers which have touched a wonder-working Icon.

been made well from this sickness.

John our priest, returning from the city of Marseilles with the goods of his trade. went to make his prayer at the Saint's tomb; then, rising up from there, he noticed the broken shackles and chain links which had held the necks and legs of the guilty, and he was full of wonder. And even this visit was not devoid of miracles: when he came back to us, this priest affirmed on oath that three blind men had recovered their sight there in his presence and had gone home healed.

While the Saint's relics were being carried with honor, to the singing of hymns, to Orleans, a city of the Gauls, the Lord granted so many graces to appear that, humbly venerating the relics, the blind recovered their sight and the lame walked straightly. Nor could anyone doubt that the confessor was present when one saw so many gifts of healing granted to the infirm.

7. A sedition arose somewhere and the crowd in a furor made the stones and torches fly, and procured arms without restraint. One man armed with a bared sword struck another a great blow; and a few days later the brother of the one who had been killed did likewise to the murderer. Having learned this, the judge of the place had this man put in prison, saying, "He is worthy of death, this scoundrel who, by his own will and without awaiting the judge's decision, had the temerity to avenge his brothers death.'" While he was held in custody, the prisoner, after having invoked the names of various saints in order to excite their compassion, turned especially to the Saint of God and said: "I have heard of you, Saint Nicetius, that you are powerful in works of mercy and generous in delivering captives who cry before you. I pray you now to deign to visit me with that excellent bounty which you have often shown in the deliverance of those who were in bonds." A short time later, while he was sleeping, the blessed one appeared to him and said: "Who are you who invoke the name of Nicetius? And whence do you know who he is, since you do not stop supplicating him?" The man gave him a detailed account of his offence and added: "Have mercy on me, I beg you, if you are the man of God I am invoking." The Saint said to him, "Get up, in Christ's name, and walk free. You will be stopped by no one." Having awakened at these words, he was full of astonishment to see his chains broken and the beam snapped. Right away, without anyone stopping him, he betook himself without fear to the Saint's tomb. Then, the judge having freed him from the sentence which he had incurred, he was released and went to his own home.

8. It is pleasant to add to these miracles the one which he performed by a lamp near his bed, for these things which this Saint, who abides in Heaven, does now upon the earth are truly great. The bed, then, in which the Saint was accustomed to sleep, and which had been made with the greatest care by Aetherius, now a bishop, was often adorned with illustrious miracles. Not without reason was it regarded with the greatest devotion, since those with fever were often healed of fever and shivering by being placed under it, and other sick persons were relieved as soon as they cast themselves on it. It is covered with a beautiful drapery, and lamps burn before it continuously. One of these continued burning for forty days and forty nights, as the sacristan assured us, without anyone doing anything to maintain it—neither papyrus for the wick nor a drop of oil. Rather, left in the same state in which it had been first put, it remained shining with light.

Gallomagnus, bishop of Troyes, came with devotion to look for relics of the Saint, and while they were being carried with psalmody, the eyes of the blind were opened by their virtue, and those sick with other ailments were granted to receive healing. We were also brought an ornamented handkerchief which the Saint had on his head the day of his death, and which we received as a heavenly gift. Now it happened that several days later we were invited to bless a church in the parish of Pernay in the diocese of Tours. I went there, consecrated an altar, pulled out some threads from the handkerchief, and placed them in the temple. Then, after I had celebrated Liturgy and prayed, I retired. Some days later, those who had invited us came to find us and said, "Rejoice in the name of the Lord, priest of God, over the virtue of the blessed bishop Nicetius; know the great miracle which he wrought in the church you consecrated! In our country there was a blind man long held in the dark night of blindness, to whom there appeared in a dream a man who said to him: 'If you wish to be healed, go prostrate yourself in prayer before the altar of the basilica of Saint Nicetius, and you will recover your sight.' When he had done so, the darkness dissipated, and the Divine power gave him light back." I acknowledge that I have placed portions of these relics in other church altars also, and the possessed there confess the Saint, and often prayer full of faith obtains its effect.

The servant of Pronimius, bishop of Agde, was struck with the onset of epilepsy, to the extent that he fell frequently, foaming at the mouth and tearing his tongue with his own teeth. By taking various remedies

from the physicians, for several months he was not affected by the sickness; but later he again fell into his sufferings and found himself worse than before. His master, seeing such great miracles wrought at the tomb of blessed Nicetius, said to him: "Go and prostrate yourself before the Saint's tomb, praying to him to deign to help you." After he had carried out this order, he came back healed, and thereafter his sickness did not affect him. It was seven years after the servant's healing that his bishop presented him to us.

9. During the Saint's lifetime a poor man had obtained from him a letter bearing his signature, with which he went to beg alms in the houses of the devout. After the Saint's death he was still using this letter, taking from charitable men no little sums, thanks to the memory of the Saint. Each one desired to see the latter's signature and gave something to the poor man. Seeing this, a certain Burgundian, who neither honored nor venerated the Saint, followed the poor man at a distance, and seeing him enter a forest, threw himself on him, took from him six gold coins together with the letter, and trampled him underfoot, leaving him half dead. But he, in the middle of the kicking and ill-treatment, cried out: "I beg you by the living God and the virtue of Saint Nicetius, at least leave me the letter, for if I lose it, I will have no other means of existence." The Burgundian threw the letter on the ground and went away; the poor man picked it up and went to the city, where Priscus was then bishop, of whom we spoke earlier. The poor man went to him and said, "Behold the man who beat me harshly and stole from me six gold coins which I had received by showing the letter of St. Nicetius." The bishop reported these matters to the count. He, as judge, had the Burgundian summoned and asked him what he had to say to that. He denied the deed before everyone, saying, "I never saw that man, nor did I take a thing from him." The bishop, looking at the letter, saw the Saint's signature, and turning towards the Burgundian, said: "See here on this letter Saint Nicetius' signature. If you are innocent, draw near and swear while touching with your hand the writing which he himself set down. For we believe in his virtue, either that he will convict you this day of the crime, or that he will let you go away innocent beyond doubt." Without scruple he went forward toward the hand of the bishop, who was holding the open letter, and as he raised his hands to pronounce the oath, he fell backward; eyes closed and foaming at the mouth, he seemed on the point of expiring. At the end of about two hours, he opened his eyes and said, "Woe to me, for I have sinned in taking this poor man's property." And

immediately he told in detail how he had done injury to that man. Then. when he had obtained pardon from the judge and returned to the poor man as much as he had stolen, adding two coins more for the blows he had given to him, both parties went out together from the judge's presence.

10. As for how many prisoners the Saint has freed, how many chains he has broken—that heap of iron which is seen in his church today is witness, gathered from the above-mentioned offerings. Recently, in the presence of King Guntram, I heard Syagrius, bishop of Autun, recount how, in one night. the blessed man had appeared in seven towns to the prisoners, how he had delivered them from their prisons and let them go free. and how after that the judges dared not do anything against them. If anyone with fever or chills or suffering from other illnesses took some of the dust from his sepulchre and drank it in water, immediately he received his health; which, doubtless, is the good deed of Him Who said to His saints, *What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them* (Mark 11:24).

11. There was in the borough of Precigny, in the diocese of Tours, a church recently built but not yet having relics of the saints. Since the residents of the locality were often asking that we bless it with the ashes of some saints, we placed in the holy altar the above-mentioned relics. Since then, the power of our Lord has very often manifested itself in that church through the blessed hierarch. Most recently, women coming from the country of Berri, three in number and tormented by a demon, betook themselves to the basilica of Saint Martin and entered the church. Immediately clapping their hands, while crying out that they had been tormented by the virtue of Saint Nicetius, spitting I know not what fluids mingled with blood, they were delivered immediately from the spirits which possessed them.

Waddo, one of those countrymen who took part in the great expedition against Comminges,* and who was in danger of death several times, vowed that if he returned home safe and sound he would give in honor of St. Nicetius, for the adornment of the above-mentioned church, some of the property he had acquired. Then, when he was on his way back, he obtained two silver chalices, and en route made a new vow to deliver them to the church, if he would arrive home safely. But when he arrived, he gave only one, and kept the other deceitfully, giving instead a Sarmatian drapery

* The city where the pretender Gundovald was besieged by King Guntram; Waddo at first supported Gundovald but later betrayed him. The siege is described in detail by St. Gregory in *HF*, VII, 34-42.

to cover the Lord's altar with the offerings. Then the blessed one appeared in a dream to this man and said: "How long will you hesitate and neglect to fulfill your vow? Go, and give the church the other chalice you promised for it, lest you and your family perish. As for the drapery, since it is thin, let it not be placed on the Gifts of the altar, because it cannot adequately cover the Mystery of the Body and Blood of our Lord." Whereupon Waddo, in fear, hesitated no longer and promptly fulfilled his vow.

That man's brother came to the vigils of the Nativity of the Lord and spoke to the priest, saying, "Let us keep vigil together in God's church and let us entreat devoutly the virtue of blessed Nicetius, that by his intercession we may pass the course of this year in peace." Hearing this, the priest joyfully had the signal given for the vigils. But when that was done and the priest had come with the clergy and the rest of the people, the man, who was subject to gluttony, delayed his arrival, and the priest sent for him several times. He answered, "Wait a little; I am coming." And what more? The vigils were ended and morning came, and he who first had spoken of them was not present at all. As for the priest, having completed the office he hastened in irritation to the man's dwelling in order to suspend him from communion. But the latter, seized with fever, was burned by a Divine fire, as also by the wine he had drunk, and as soon as he had seen the priest, he begged him with tears that a penance be imposed upon him. And as the priest was reproaching him and saying, "Rightly you burn by the virtue of Saint Nicetius, into whose church you neglected to come for vigils," in the middle of these words the man gave up the ghost. Then, at the third hour, when the people had assembled for the celebration of the Liturgy, the dead man was carried into the church. No one could doubt what had been done by the holy bishop's power. The priest himself told it to us. We could speak of many other things which we have known from our own experience or by the account of credible persons,, but we think that would be too long.

12. However, since an end must be put to this account, we will report one marvel relating to the book written on his life of which we spoke above. The Divine virtue, having gone out from this book, far from leaving Nicetius without glory, manifests how glorious he is by demonstrating the virtue of its marvellous accounts. A deacon of Autun, afflicted with a painful blindness of the eyes, learned of what God, the glorifier of His saints, was doing at the Saint's tomb, and he said to his family: "If I go to his tomb and take something of his relics, or if at least I touch the mantle by

which his holy limbs are covered, I will become well." And when he repeated this and similar things to his friends, there was a cleric there who said, "You are right to believe that, but if you wish to strengthen your opnion about these miracles, here is a parchment volume written about them, so that you may believe more easily those things which have come to your hearing." But the deacon, even before having the desire to read it, said by the inspiration of a Divine piety: "I believe that God has the power to work miracles through His servants." And at the same time he put the volume on his eyes. Immediately the pain and darkness were dissipated, and by the virtue of this volume he recovered his sight with so much clarity that, reading with his own eyes, he learned of these narratives of miracles. Thus it is the Lord alone Who works all these things and Who is glorified in His saints, whom He makes glorious by illustrious miracles. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.

NOTES

St. Gregory was the nephew of St. Nicetius and served as deacon under him. The original Life of St. Nicetius of which he speaks still exists in Latin, but seems to have no more information on the events of his life than St. Gregory's account.

St. Nicetius was born in 513, became bishop of Lyons in 551, and died in 573. Bishop Priscus succeeded him as bishop of Lyons and continued his hostility to the Saint's memory, finally calling the wrath of God upon himself, as described by St. Gregory in *The History of the Franks,* IV, 36. Bishop Aetherius, who made the Saint's bed, was his disciple; he succeeded Priscus as bishop of Lyons in 586 and established the veneration of Nicetius as a saint.

Childebert I, son of King Clovis, divided his father's kingdom with his three brothers. He died in Paris in 558. King Guntram was the grandson of Clovis and son of Lothar.

The journey of St. Gregory's deacon Agiulf to Rome is set forth in *HF,* X,1, where the election of St. Gregory the Dialogist as Pope of Rome (590) is described and the text of St. Gregory's address to the people of Rome concerning the plague of that time is given.

Help from Archbishop John

How can I ever thank you for the precious gift you sent me, *Blessed John, The Chronicle of the Veneration of Archbishop John Maximovitch*?

I am extremely ill; I found out I have angina pectoris. Due to this I had two major seizures. In the second seizure, when I came out of my faint, I remembered lying on the floor, wondering where I was, what had happened, etc. I was very clammy and in complete agony.

The next day I awoke and was immobilized from the pain. I had to just about be carried out of bed. Then, one day at 12 noon, I suddenly felt much better, and I managed to get out of bed by myself. I was confused. I looked out of the window, and the postman was in the street. He brought me a package. I opened it and saw *Blessed John* along with your card. I knew immediately that a miracle had happened. I cried for joy. Since then, I put *Blessed John* on my ribs, where the pain is the most and the pain then melts away and I am able to walk again.

When I am able to, I will have a pannikhida said for our most venerable Blessed John. What else can I possibly do to glorify Vladika John Maximovitch?

Marina McCormack
Newark, New Jersey

Ed. Note: The writer of this account died some months after this was written, but there can be no doubt that Archbishop John helped her to endure her illness. This issue of The Orthodox Word *gives a similar case of help given by placing the book of a saint's Life (St. Nicetius of Lyons) on an afflicted part of the body.*

Letters

(Continued from inside front cover)

ly received Holy Unction, confessed his sins (some of them publicly), received Holy Communion, and died joyfully, seeing "Saints" and "Heaven" in a most miraculous way. I was present.

But otherwise, the texts you collected so laboriously, both on the Orthodox teaching on life and death and on the Saints' and loved ones' help to us from the other world, as well as on our prayers for and to them in this world — are in your exposition really brilliant. Thank you!

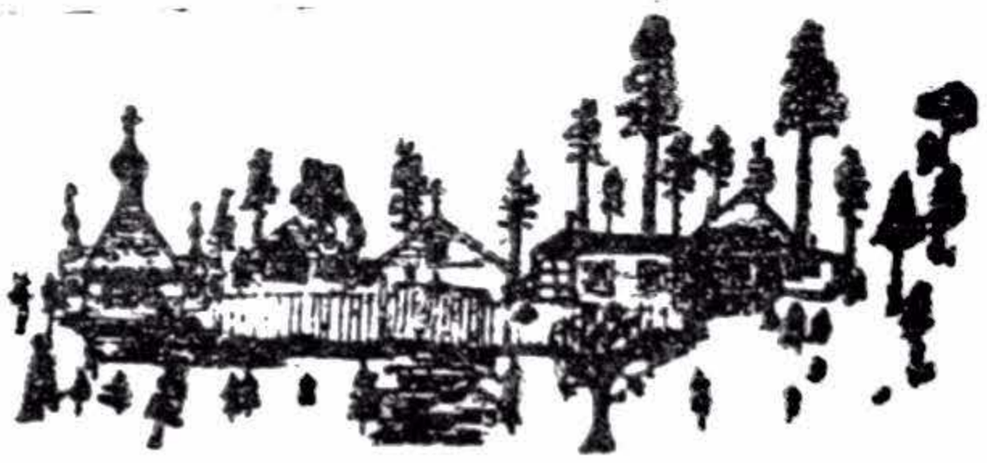
Rev. B., California

ED. NOTE: While it is true that "The Soul after Death" expressed a rather negative view of today's "after-death" experiences, this view was based primarily on the occult interpretation of these experiences which most researchers today seem to accept. The book, however, does express the idea that a person already somewhat grounded in Orthodox teaching can find his faith in life after death strengthened by reading of today's experiences — they give a hint of the after-death reality which is more fully described in Orthodox literature. Of course, no one need deny the grace-given nature of the experience of the 18-year-old boy described in this letter; but such striking experiences are very seldom described in today's "after-death" accounts, most of which concern very vague experiences which easily lend themselves to the occult interpretations which which are so often given them.

A strange thing happened to me. I was awakened about 4 a.m. this morning by an amazing dream in which my wife's aunt called me on the phone and said: "What should I expect to happen when I die?" And in this dream-state I began to explain to her about death, and that she should confess the Lord Jesus Christ and repent of her sins.

I was so surprised by the dream that I couldn't go back to sleep, but prayed for her. Then, when my wife woke up at the normal time, I told her about it and said that I had a strong "feeling" that her aunt had either come out of her coma or had died, and would she call and find out? It turned out that her aunt had just died! I've never had such an experience before, but it was extremely vivid, much more so than a "dream" usually is.

Rev. A., California



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11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(Signature) Father Seraphim